

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 16 are independent.

The Specification has been amended to provide cross-reference to the priority applications.

Conclusion

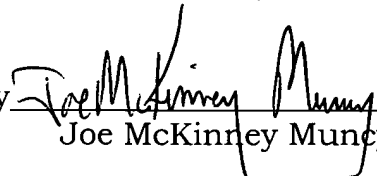
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Mr. Joe McKinney Muncy (Reg. No. 32,334) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By


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KM/clb
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